



5th Grade Lesson Plan #1 (Utah) *Trailblazers*

Objective: Students will describe the Dominguez-Escalante expedition and its impact on westward expansion.

Utah State Standard 4: Students will understand that the 19th century was a time of incredible change for the United States, including geographic expansion, constitutional crisis, and economic growth.

Objective 1: Investigate the significant events during America's expansion and the roles people played

Pipe Spring National Monument Theme 2: The history of Pipe Spring is a saga of relationships among different ethnic, political, and religious cultures.

Materials: "Trailblazers" handout, Spanish Trail map, pencils, paper, and colored pencils

Procedures:

Opening/Introduction: Put the word "Explorer" on the board. Have students come up with all of the words that associate with that word. Students should come up with a good list. Most students will not come up with priests or children as explorers. Introduce idea that there have been some explorers that don't fit the words they just picked out. Ask the students, what if I told you there was someone very close to your age who was also an explorer? Today, we're going to learn about some very unlikely explorers.

Re-introduce the trails Americans used to come out west from previous lesson. Have a picture of the Old Spanish Trail and point to it. Ask students why this would be an important trail to Utah. A student should answer that it goes right through Utah. Exactly! Explain to students that this is the trail they will focus on today and its explorers who were not people you would expect to be explorers.

Activity: Have students create a 4 scene comic strip of the Dominguez-Escalante expedition, showing its progression and its impact using the "Trailblazers" handout. As students read, have them take note of a few of the major events that they can depict as their scenes for the strip. Instruct students that the comics must show effort

Conclusion: Come back to your "Explorer" list on the board and go over the traits listed. Ask students if they think Joaquin or the friars had these traits. Students should say yes mostly. Remind students that even though Joaquin and the friars did not fit their physical image of an explorer, they do fit their mental image, demonstrating that you cannot judge what someone can do just by looking at their outside.



Pipe Spring National Monument

Old Spanish National Historic Trail



Pipe Spring National Monument



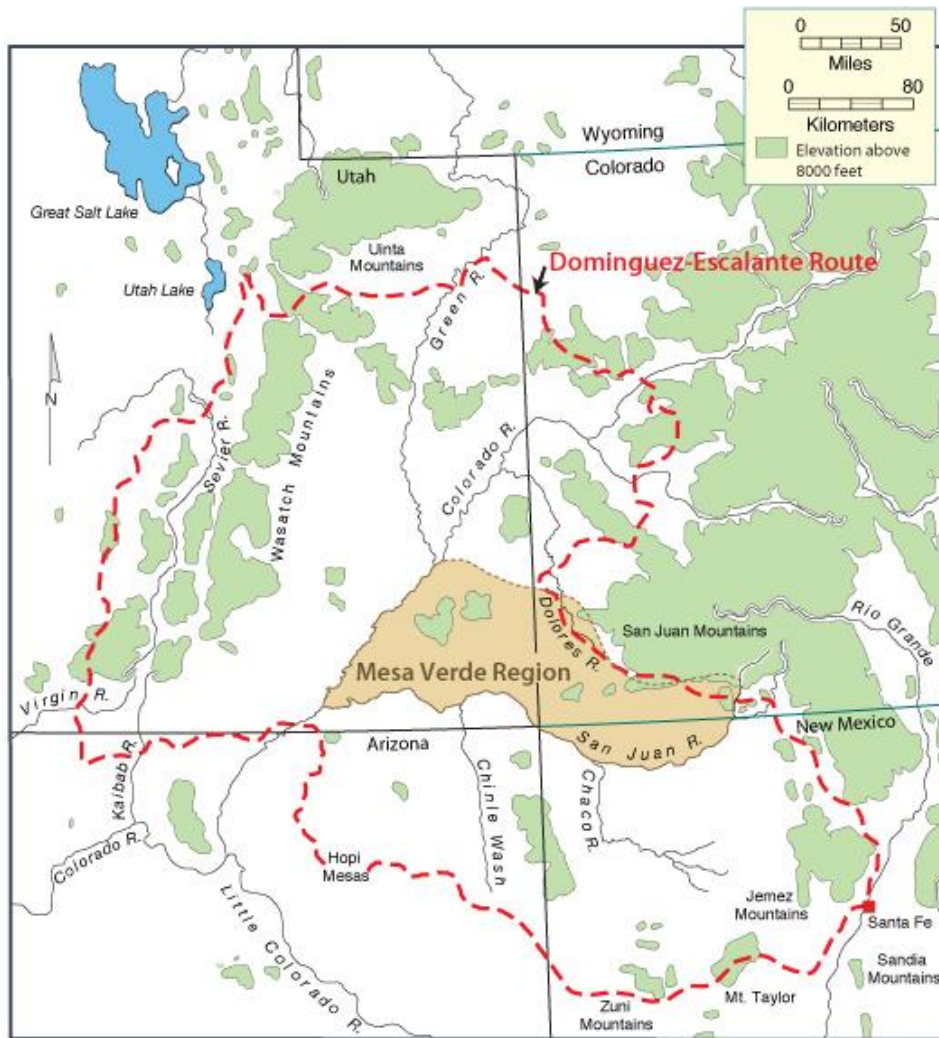
Can you imagine what it would be like to be a guide for a group of explorers? Venturing off into unknown lands and meeting new people who might attack or feed you depending on their mood? In 1776, that was exactly the position a young boy called Joaquin found himself in. Joaquin was a 12 year old Timpanogos Ute Indian who lived near what is now Dinosaur National Monument. He had befriended two Franciscan friars of the Catholic Church in service to the Spanish Empire, Atanasio Domínguez and Francisco Silvestre Vélez de Escalante, who were attempting to blaze a trail from Santa Fe to Spanish missions in California through Utah. They had already traveled through most of Colorado when they met Joaquin and were in great need of someone who could help guide them the rest of the way through Utah. Joaquin and another Ute man called Silvestre volunteered to help the friars get to the Utah Valley. Joaquin and Silvestre both had relatives there, so they knew the way very well and promised to help the friars find another guide who could lead them through the rest of Utah.

As they traveled, Dominguez and Escalante were very impressed with the lands that now make up Utah. In their journals, they wrote of the streams and rivers they crossed and the different Native American tribes they met. When they reached the Utah Valley, Joaquin decided to stay with the Dominguez and Escalante party for the rest of the journey in order to help them. He liked the friars and had converted to Catholicism. Another Native American man joined their group as a guide, but he became homesick and left the party. Soon the entire party was lost and in danger. Winter had come early to Utah. Dominguez and Escalante debated whether they should still try and go to California or go back to Santa Fe. Ultimately, they decided it would be too difficult to go on and turned east to find their way back to Santa Fe.

On their return journey, Dominguez and Escalante's party traveled through southern Utah and across northern Arizona. Joaquin helped the friars make friends with other local tribes and find food and water. They met several different bands of Southern Paiutes, who directed them after they made a wrong turn and ended up blocked by the Grand Canyon. When the expedition finally reached Santa Fe, Dominguez and Escalante told everyone of their journey and how wonderful the land in Utah was, but the Spanish never established any settlements there. They were too focused on building communities in other parts of the southwest.

As the years passed a new country called the United States of America grew, American traders followed the trail Dominguez and Escalante had written about. John C. Fremont, the famous explorer, even named the Spanish Fork River in the friars' honor in 1844. Mormon settlers, who arrived in the Salt Lake Valley in 1847, also used Dominguez and Escalante's trail to expand their settlements south. Dominguez and Escalante's trail eventually became one of the main sections of the Old Spanish Trail, which other settlers used on their way to California. Though Dominguez and Escalante never lived to see it, their expedition helped Utah and other states grow and become what they are today, which is why we remember them and the young boy that helped them.

Pipe Spring National Monument



Map Courtesy of Washington County Historical Society

References:

Alexander, Thomas G. "Dominguez-Escalante Expedition", *Utah History to Go*. December 13, 2011. [http://historytogo.utah.gov/utah_chapters/trappers, traders, and explorers/dominguez-escalanteexpedition.html](http://historytogo.utah.gov/utah_chapters/trappers,_traders,_and_explorers/dominguez-escalanteexpedition.html)

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Warner, Ted. *The Dominguez-Escalante Journal: Their Expedition through Colorado, Utah, Arizona, and New Mexico in 1776*. (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1995).